

App. No. 10/528,594
Office Action Dated March 6, 2006

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1, 10, 11, and 13 are hereby amended. Claims 17 and 18 are new.

Amendments of claims 1, 10, 11, and 13 are supported by Figure 1. New claim 17 is supported by Figure 1. New claim 18 is supported by the subject matter of claim 11.

Claims 1-3 were rejected as being anticipated by Nimura (US 5,762,983). Applicants traverse this rejection. Nimura does not disclose an apparatus for forming an air bag cover including a plurality of grooving blades for forming a plurality of break grooves defining the air bag door at the air bag cover, wherein a supporting member comes into contact with the air bag door between the plurality of grooving blades when the core is separated from the air bag door, as required by claim 1. Rather, Nimura teaches pushing pins (14, the rejection equates to the claimed supporting member) provided outside the region of the air bag door (within the side wall 4) of the air bag cover (1). Claim 1 requires that a supporting member comes into contact with the air bag door between the plurality of grooving blades. However, the pushing pins (14) taught by Nimura are provided outside of the air bag door region defined by the tearing lines (3, rejection equates to the claimed grooving blades). See Figures 4 and 5. Further, one would not be motivated to move the pushing pins (14) taught by Nimura to be positioned within the door region. The pushing pins (14) are for pushing up the air bag cover (1), and therefore, such relocation to within the door region would likely prematurely break the tear lines (3).

While the specification of the current application discusses the benefit of providing extruding pins for pushing out a molded air bag cover from a mold outside the region of the air bag door, such extruding pins should not be confused with the support member required by claim 1, which contacts the air bag cover within the region of the air bag door. See page 13, lines 4-22 of the current application.

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The plurality of grooving blades required by claim 1 form break grooves that define the air bag door. The break grooves allow the air bag door to open quickly and easily at the time of a car accident. However, in manufacturing of the air bag cover, the portions of the air bag cover between the break grooves tend to be pulled downward by downwardly moving cores. A considerable amount of stress could possibly concentrate at the break grooves to result in premature damage to the air bag cover. The required apparatus structure of claim 1 prevents such premature air bag cover damage.

Favorable reconsideration of claims 1-3 is requested.

Claims 4-10 were rejected as being unpatentable over Nimura in view of Sorenson (US 4,867,672). Applicants traverse this rejection. Claims 4-10 should be considered allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1, from they depend. Sorenson does not remedy the deficiencies of Nimura, as previously noted. Applicants are not conceding the correctness of the rejection as applied to the rejected claims. Favorable reconsideration of claims 4-10 is requested.

Claims 14-16 were rejected as being unpatentable over Nimura in view of Kikuchi (US 6,042,363). Applicants traverse this rejection. Claims 14-16 should be considered allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1, from which they depend. Kikuchi does not remedy the deficiencies of Nimura, as previously noted. Applicants are not conceding the correctness of the rejection as applied to the rejected claims. Favorable reconsideration of claims 14-16 is requested.

New claim 17 should be considered allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1, from which it depends. Favorable examination of new claim 17 is requested.

New claim 18 should be considered allowable for at least the same reasons as allowed claim 11. Favorable examination of new claim 18 is requested.

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In view of the above, favorable reconsideration in the form of a notice of allowance is requested. Any questions regarding this communication can be directed to the attorney of record, Douglas P. Mueller, Reg. No. 30,300, at (612)455-3804.

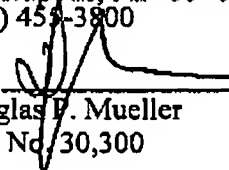


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DPM/mfe

Respectfully submitted,

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